1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5)1938 Pukapukans

857 195 I have no data on how the child begins to talk. Old women say that the first words that the child utters are "epe epe" (meaningless). It was noticed that children learning to talk tended to repeat words, phrases and sentences used by older children in their presence. Baby talk is never used by adults when speaking to an infant or child. Mothers could give no vocabulary of words generally mispronounced by children in their efforts to speak, and none was noticed. The only abbreviation that mothers could think of was the word "tiko" instead of "titiko" (defecate).

854 The child is mainly cared for by its mother. The father has no specific functions to perform. He is no less sympathetic and lavish in his affection for his child, and cares for the child whenever it is necessary or convenient. There is no antagonism or conflict between the two parents as to the care of the child, which is looked upon as belonging equally to both parents who harmoniously tend its needs. Older siblings take care of the child only when the parents are absent and then only for short periods.

Weaning

862 Careful analysis shows that there are two types of treatment in the weaning of the child:

The first is used if the mother becomes ill, or if her milk fails, or if she becomes pregnant while the child is still feeding at the breast. In such case, the child is suddenly and immediately removed from its mother's presence and care, and placed entirely in the care of a feeding parent, usually father's sister or mother's mother. This process is called *wakamotu* (to break off). It is complete and absolute. The feeding parent nurses the child day and night, feeding it coconut water from a coconut shell, or grated coconut flesh and grated taro. She carries the child about most of the night, which is considered the most difficult time to keep the child pacified. Mothers say that this weaning process takes a week in the case of the most easily weaned child and as much as two weeks in the case of a fretful or difficult child. Whatever the length of time, the child is kept completely separated from its mother.

862 856 866 The second method of weaning is a more gradual process. The child is taken to feeding parents in another village and left with them for a day at a time. It is fed coconut and taro. The feeding parents fondle it and try to keep it happy and satisfied without its mother. This occurs once or twice a week over a period of two months, the mother meanwhile trying to accustom the child to solid foods, feeding him coconut and taro before giving the breast. By the end of these months the child is walking, and is encouraged to identify itself with the activities of its siblings, to play away from its mother as much as possible. More and more the mother refuses to give it the breast at its demand, so that finally weaning is accomplished by a series of gradual steps in which other interests and other foods gradually assume an importance in the child's mind, the food gaining status and prestige through being associated with a group of elders with which the child definitely wishes to be identified. It is probable that hesitations over taking the steps of the weaning process are overcome also for the child by ridicule directed toward it by his elders.

Education

871 Formal education of the child is markedly absent in Pukapuka today as formerly. There was no institution comparable to the "house of learning" of other Polynesian communities, nor was there a dichotomy of education, formal or informal, based on class distinctions. All the child needs to know

862 The degree to which the process of weaning is traumatic depends somewhat on the type of weaning carried out. There are two methods of weaning in Pukapuka. The first is used if the mother becomes ill, or if the milk fails, or if she becomes pregnant again. In such case, the child is suddenly and immediately removed from its mother's presence and care and placed entirely in the care of a feeding parent, usually the father's sister or the mother's mother. The breaking off is complete and absolute. The feeding parent carries the child about day and night, trying to pacify it and feeding it coconut water, grated coconut, and grated taro. For some children this weaning may take a week to complete. For children more dependent upon their mothers, weaning may take two or more weeks. The second method of weaning is more gradual. The infant is taken to feeding parents in another village and left with them for a whole day at a time. The feeding parents fondle the child, feed it solid foods, and try to keep it happy and pacified. This occurs once or twice a week over a period of about two months, the mother meanwhile trying to accustom the child to solid foods, feeding him coconut and taro before giving the breast. By the end of these months, the child is walking [866] fairly well. He is encouraged to identify himself with the activities of his siblings, to play away from his mother as much as possible. More and more the mother refuses to give the breast at the child's demand. The weaning is thus accomplished by a series of gradual steps in which other interests and other foods assume an importance in the child's mind because both are associated with the status and prestige of a group of elder children with whom the child's lot is more involved. Any hesitations over taking the steps of the weaning process are overcome for the child by the well-directed and unmistakable ridicule of elders, both adult and children.

857 Again it may be noted that by the time the weaning stage is passed and the child is ready 861 to join the children's play groups there has been little physical frustration and a lack of any discipline that could be called severe. The child has been a center of interest during infancy. Now it has been gently eased out of infancy and into the status of a relatively self-dependent [154] childhood. Thumb sucking, incidentally, as distinguished from object sucking, is unknown among Pukapukan infants or children. This gradual process of growing up is continued during the early years of childhood (from the age, say, of two to seven or eight). Young children form mixed-sex gangs. They are relatively free from adult demands or adult interference of any sort. These gangs, consisting of perhaps six or more children drawn from neighboring households, roam about bush, reef, or beach by day or night. Their plays are either imitative games mimicking adult activities—fishing games, domestic games, "family games" (realistically acting the roles of husband and wife)—or else the free-energy activities apparently characteristic of children everywhere—laughing, dancing, racing, singing, and swimming. Hungry, the children drift back to the village for food; tired, they throw themselves down in the house for a sleep of one hour or eight. The gangs have a relatively stable existence. They appear to be based mainly on age level. Children of the upper age gradually drift out to join groups of still older children. Their places are taken by the "weaners" who drift into the group from below. Adults are generally tolerant of these children's gangs. As long as they keep to themselves, amuse themselves with their own activities, and in general are rarely